



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Department Adopts Universal Waste Regulations

Sacramento-- The California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced the approval of emergency regulations regarding the collection, transportation and recycling of universal wastes. Universal wastes include fluorescent tubes, high intensity discharge lamps, mercury vapor lamps, batteries (other than automotive type lead-acid batteries), and mercury containing thermostats.

The emergency regulations, approved by the Office of Administrative Law, closely mirror the federal Universal Waste Rule which became effective on January 6, 2000. The Universal Waste Rule does not identify any new materials as hazardous, but it establishes streamlined standards for collection and transportation of these wastestreams. Under the rules, a common carrier may transport universal waste without a hazardous waste manifest.

The goal of the Universal Waste Rule is to ensure environmental protection by requiring disposal of the wastes at authorized hazardous waste disposal or recycling facilities. Universal wastes generated by households and Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators are exempt from the new regulations..

The emergency regulations will be in effect for the next 120 days. DTSC anticipates that permanent regulations will replace the emergency regulations later this year.

Under the emergency regulations there are three basic categories of universal wastes:

- ▶ **Hazardous waste thermostats:** These are thermostats that contain small glass capsules of mercury used to make electrical contact. However, not all thermostats contain mercury capsules. Therefore, they are not considered a universal waste. For example, modern, fully, electronic, thermostats that do not contain mercury are not considered as universal waste.

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- ▶ Hazardous waste batteries: These include rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries, silver button batteries, mercury batteries, small sealed lead acid batteries, (burglar alarm and emergency light batteries), most alkaline batteries, carbon-zinc batteries that exhibit corrosive characteristics.
- ▶ Hazardous waste lamps: These are lighting wastes that exhibit some hazardous waste characteristics. Included in this category are some fluorescent tubes, high intensity discharge lamps, and sodium vapor lamps.

A copy of the emergency regulations and fact sheets on the program can be found in the "What's New" section of the DTSC website (www.dtsc.ca.gov).

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DTSC is one of the six boards and departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency. DTSC's mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment by regulating the management of hazardous waste and promoting reduction.